



EXCHANGE REPORT

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Spring 2019

Monthly Activity Log

January

I arrived at Stockholm one day before the official orientation day. The extremely short daytime in Nordic winter shocked me as the sun set at 3 p.m. I spent the next two weeks explored the city and its attractive museums and galleries.



February

I enrolled in two major courses and one Swedish course in the first period. Similar to most SSE students, I have six lectures and two tutorials each week. The flexible and relatively relaxed timetable enabled me to spend much time walking around the city. I together with several friends went to Norway and Abisko, the Swedish national park famous for northern lights in winter and hiking trail in summer, to catch the unforgettable lights.



March

The first period ended in March, and I spent hours preparing for final exams and group projects. There's no holidays between two periods, however, I still grabbed the weekends to visit Iceland. Stockholm is still in winter in March, all grassland and trees covered by snow.



April

In the second period, I enrolled in two major courses and only have four lectures each week. The audit course I enrolled in only has four students, however, we still had guest each week from big 4 audit firms and Swedish authorities to deliver lectures. It's amazing. Spring returned Stockholm in late April and the cherry-blossom festival in King's garden attracted the city's attention.



May

Though Walpurgis night on April 30th officially proclaimed the coming of summertime, temperature in Stockholm is still below 10 at night. I went to a small island in Baltic sea called Gotland, which has a magnificent history and extraordinary landscape. The world-renowned Swedish film director Bergman also lived and produced most of his works on that lovely island one-hour flight away from Stockholm. It's definitely worth a visit, especially in summertime to enjoy the beach and water activities.



June

All lectures are finished in the first week of June. We visited our Auditing course's professor in South Stockholm, enjoyed lunch and Fika in his yard together and delivered our final presentation. My last written examination was in the middle of June. Summer in Sweden is pretty lovely and joyful, hope I can stay for another couple of days to enjoy it.

General Exchange Information

Visa Procedures

After received SSE's first welcome package by email, you may find instructions on how to apply for the acceptance letter and Swedish residential permit. The whole application is proceeded online, and you only need to submit softcopy of the documents needed. The consulate will provide instruction on how to register and receive the card after you entered Sweden.

Important note for students holding Chinese passport: besides residential permit, you need a valid VISA to enter Sweden. Hence it's not possible to follow the above procedures as the Swedish consulate in Hong Kong no longer provides any visa-related services. You need to choose Swedish consulate in Shanghai or Beijing in online application to process your visa application and receive a valid residential permit card before entering Sweden. You also need to visit consulate in person to provide bio information (fingerprint and photo). You are advised to initiate application as soon as possible.

Orientation Activities

SSE and the student union will hold an orientation day right before the Spring semester starts. You will join in a complimentary city bus tour, and be assigned to an exchange buddy group to show you around the campus. (To be honest, SSE is a small school with one main building and one computer lab building.) Remember to get an access card on the orientation day.

Accommodations

Almost all exchange students are assigned to the renowned Lappis or Saltis. Remember to fill in the room application form before deadline, which you will receive through email.

Saltis is closer to campus (only a 3-minute walk).

Lappis is a large student housing community, majorly inhabited by students from SSE, RTH and Stockholm University. There's a 15-minute bus commute. Room is larger and less expensive compared to Saltis. It's easier to apply for a single room here.

Courses Registration

One semester consists two periods. You're allowed to choose two courses and an additional Swedish language course in each period.

Feel free to walk in the program office once you arrived at SSE. They are pretty friendly and happy to offer exchange students help on course registration and withdrawal issues (even after the initial deadline, if you encountered any problem).

Teaching & Assessment Methods

Teaching method is quite similar to HKUST, includes lectures, seminars, group project, essay, and presentations. Remember to bring your passport with you in final examinations.

Sports & Recreation Facilities

There are two gyms near SSE, you may use your digital student card to enjoy a special discount. Student Union also holds weekly practice for university sport teams and also general students. Check weekly calendars on their official website or Facebook page if you are interested.

Finance & Banking (including currency / expenses)

Sweden is a cashless country, credit cards and swish (their national mobile payment system) are used extensively even in convenience stores and vending machines.

ATMs in Sweden DO NOT accept unionpay debit cards for cash withdrawal (most banks in Hong Kong only issue unionpay debit card now as far as I know). You may use visa/MasterCard credit cards to withdraw money, however, pay attention to the service fees and inform your bank to turn on the international cash withdrawal services.

You could also choose to open up a local bank account at SEB and use wire transfer to transfer money from Hong Kong to Sweden. (Students living in Sweden less than 1 year are not allowed to apply for a personal number, hence banking services provided is very limited.)

Health & Safety

Stockholm is a relatively safe city thanks to Sweden's welfare economy and stable social conditions. You are still advised to follow the general safety guidelines.

In Stockholm if you feel unwell, you shall call the 24-hour hotline 1177 to get a general treatment, the hotline is in principle held in Swedish but the nurses can also speak excellent English in most cases. The nurse may refer you to a specific clinic to accept further treatment if needed. Interpreters are free of charge. Remember to request the nurse to help you with the booking procedures.

Call 112 if a person's life is in danger or serious mental problems, and you need help straight away.

Food

Besides the world-famous Swedish Fika (afternoon tea) and meatballs, there're lots of traditional and modern Nordic cuisines to explore. Japanese food in Stockholm is also in pretty high quality. SSE located in the heart of Stockholm, surrounded by lovely cafes, bistros and even Michelin star-winning restaurants. Do grab this opportunity to enjoy the Nordic cate!

Transportation

Students may subscribe to travel plans with special discounts. All travel plans (the only difference is time period) include unlimited rides on city subways, buses, commute rails, ferries and trams. Fun fact: Stockholm subway system is operated by MTR.

Climate

To be honest, winter in Stockholm is not that cold as I imagined. However, do remember to bring thick coats, scarf and glove with you if you plan to watch Northern lights in northern Sweden. It's COLD there!

Thick enough clothes that can resist the extreme weather near North pole are not commonly available in Hong Kong, choices are also very limited. You may find lots of options in good quality and reasonable price after arrived at Sweden. Don't forget that Stockholm is the heart of Scandinavian design and Nordic fashion industry.

Communication

All Nordic countries have their own languages, however, almost all citizens can speak excellent English. Hence communication is never a problem for me when travelling in northern Europe.

However, some labels and contents may only available in Swedish. Google translate may help in such cases.

Internet and telephone services

You may use your ITSC account to connect to eduroam Wi-Fi within campus. Lappis and Saltis provide complimentary Wi-Fi services in dormitories.

You may purchase SIM cards and top up in convenience stores easily. Remember to ask if a specific data package is for all EU countries or Sweden only.

Items to Bring

- Passport and ID
- Hardcopy of acceptance letter (may use in passport control)
- Insurance document
- Credit card
- Warm clothes (down jacket & beanie)
- Winter shoes
- Plug adaptor

Useful Links and Contacts

University official page: <https://www.hhs.se>

Useful information for incoming exchange students:

<https://www.hhs.se/en/education/study-at-sse/global-opportunities/student-exchange/incoming-exchange-students/>

Housing office: <https://www.hhs.se/en/education/study-at-sse/housing/>

Stockholm's official guide and event timetables: <https://www.visitstockholm.com>

Healthcare information: <https://www.1177.se/en/Stockholm/other-languages/other-languages/soka-varld/soka-varld-om-du-ar-asy/sokande-eller-papperslos---andra-sprak/>